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THE NÜRNBERG STOVE

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FOR WHAT HE SAW WAS NOTHING LESS THAN ALL THE BRIC-A-BRAC IN MOTION

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THE NÜRNBERG STOVE

BY

LOUISA DE LA RAMÉ
(OUIDA)

ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY
MARIA L. KIRK

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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FOR WHAT HE SAW WAS NOTHING LESS THAN ALL THE BRIC-À-BRAC IN MOTION ..... *Frontispiece*

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close at hand, is a cloister with beautiful marbl columns and tombs, and a colossal wood-carve Calvary, and beside that a small and very ric chapel: indeed, so full is the little town of th undisturbed past, that to walk in it is like open ing a missal of the Middle Ages, all emblazone and illuminated with saints and warriors, an it is so clean, and so still, and so noble, by reaso of its monuments and its historic color, that marvel much no one has ever cared to sing it praises. The old pious heroic life of an age a once more restful and more brave than ours sti leaves its spirit there, and then there is the girdl of the mountains all around, and that alone mean strength, peace, majesty.

In this little town a few years ago Augus Strehla lived with his people in the stone-pave irregular square where the grand church stand

He was a small boy of nine years at that tim —a chubby-faced little man with rosy cheek big hazel eyes, and clusters of curls the brow of ripe nuts. His mother was dead, his fathe was poor, and there were many mouths at hom to feed. In this country the winters are lon and very cold, the whole land lies wrapped i snow for many months, and this night that h was trotting home, with a jug of beer in his num

WENT ON THROUGH THE STREETS, PAST THE STONE MAN-AT-ARMS OF THE GUARD-HOUSE

red hands, was terribly cold and dreary. The good burghers of Hall had shut their double shutters, and the few lamps there were flickered dully behind their quaint, old-fashioned iron casings. The mountains indeed were beautiful, all snow-white under the stars that are so big in frost. Hardly any one was astir; a few good souls wending home from vespers, a tired post-boy who blew a shrill blast from his tasselled horn as he pulled up his sledge before a hostelry, and little August hugging his jug of beer to his ragged sheepskin coat, were all who were abroad, for the snow fell heavily and the good folks of Hall go early to their beds. He could not run, or he would have spilled the beer; he was half frozen and a little frightened, but he kept up his courage by saying over and over again to himself, "I shall soon be at home with dear Hirschvogel."

He went on through the streets, past the stone man-at-arms of the guard house, and so into the place where the great church was, and where near it stood his father, Karl Strehla's house, with a sculptured Bethlehem over the door-way, and the Pilgrimage of the Three Kings painted on its wall. He had been sent on a long errand outside the gates in the afternoon, over the frozen

fields and the broad white snow, and had been be-
lated, and had thought he had heard the wolves
behind him at every step, and had reached the
town in a great state of terror, thankful with all
his little panting heart to see the oil-lamp burn-
ing under the first house-shrine. But he had not
forgotten to call for the beer, and he carried it
carefully now, though his hands were so numb
that he was afraid they would let the jug down
every moment.

The snow outlined with white every gable and
cornice of the beautiful old wooden houses; the
moonlight shone on the gilded signs, the lambs,
the grapes, the eagles, and all the quaint devices
that hung before the doors; covered lamps burned
before the Nativities and Crucifixions painted
on the walls or let into the wood-work; here and
there, where a shutter had not been closed, a
ruddy fire-light lit up a homely interior, with the
noisy band of children clustering round the house-
mother and a big brown loaf, or some gossip
spinning and listening to the cobbler's or the
barber's story of a neighbor, while the oil-wick
glimmered, and the hearth-logs blazed, and the
chestnuts sputtered in their iron roasting-pot.
Little August saw all these things, as he saw
everything with his two big bright eyes that had

such curious lights and shadows in them; but he went heedfully on his way for the sake of the beer which a single slip of the foot would make him spill. At his knock and call the solid oak door, four centuries old if one, flew open, and the boy darted in with his beer, and shouted, with all the force of mirthful lungs, "Oh, dear Hirschvogel, but for the thought of you I should have died!"

It was a large barren room into which he rushed with so much pleasure, and the bricks were bare and uneven. It had a walnut-wood press, handsome and very old, a broad deal table, and several wooden stools for all its furniture; but at the top of the chamber, sending out warmth and color together as the lamp shed its rays upon it, was a tower of porcelain, burnished with all the hues of a king's peacock and a queen's jewels, and surmounted with armed figures, and shields, and flowers of heraldry, and a great golden crown upon the highest summit of all.

II

IT was a stove of 1532, and on it were the letter H. R. H., for it was in every portion th handwork of the great potter of Nürnber Augustin Hirschvogel, who put his mark thu as all the world knows.

The stove no doubt had stood in palaces an been made for princes, had warmed the crimso stockings of cardinals and the gold-broidere shoes of archduchesses, had glowed in presenc chambers and lent its carbon to help kindle shar brains in anxious councils of state; no one kne what it had seen or done or been fashioned fo but it was a right royal thing. Yet perhaps had never been more useful than it was now i this poor desolate room, sending down heat an comfort into the troop of children tumbled t gether on a wolf-skin at its feet, who receive frozen August among them with loud shouts joy.

"Oh, dear Hirschvogel, I am so cold, so cold said August, kissing its gilded lion's claws. " father not in, Dorothea?"

"No, dear. He is late."

Dorothea was a girl of seventeen, dark-hair and serious, and with a sweet sad face, for s

had had many cares laid on her shoulders, even whilst still a mere baby. She was the eldest of the Strehla family, and there were ten of them in all. Next to her there came Jan and Karl and Otho, big lads, gaining a little for their own living; and then came August, who went up in the summer to the high Alps with the farmers' cattle, but in winter could do nothing to fill his own little platter and pot; and then all the little ones, who could only open their mouths to be fed like young birds,—Albrecht and Hilda, and Waldo and Christof, and last of all little three-year-old Ermengilda, with eyes like forget-me-nots, whose birth had cost them the life of their mother.

They were of that mixed race, half Austrian, half Italian, so common in the Tyrol; some of the children were white and golden as lilies, others were brown and brilliant as fresh-fallen chestnuts. The father was a good man, but weak and weary with so many to find for and so little to do it with. He worked at the salt-furnaces, and by that gained a few florins; people said he would have worked better and kept his family more easily if he had not loved his pipe and a draught of ale too well; but this had only been said of him after his wife's death, when trouble and perplexity had begun to dull a brain never too vigor-

ous, and to enfeeble further a character already too yielding. As it was, the wolf often bayed at the door of the Strehla household, without a wolf from the mountains coming down. Dorothea was one of those maidens who almost work miracles so far can their industry and care and intelligence make a home sweet and wholesome and a single loaf seem to swell into twenty. The children were always clean and happy, and the table was seldom without its big pot of soup once a day. Still, very poor they were, and Dorothea's heart ached with shame, for she knew that their father's debts were many for flour and meat and clothing. Of fuel to feed the big stove they had always enough without cost, for their mother's father was alive, and sold wood and fir cones and coke, and never grudged them to his grandchildren, though he grumbled at Strehla's improvidence and hapless, dreamy ways.

"Father says we are never to wait for him we will have supper, now you have come home dear," said Dorothea, who, however she might fret her soul in secret as she knitted their hose and mended their shirts, never let her anxieties cast a gloom on the children; only to August she did speak a little sometimes, because he was so thoughtful and so tender of her always, and knew

as well as she did that there were troubles about money,—though these troubles were vague to them both, and the debtors were patient and kindly, being neighbors all in the old twisting streets between the guard-house and the river.

Supper was a huge bowl of soup, with big slices of brown bread swimming in it and some onions bobbing up and down: the bowl was soon emptied by ten wooden spoons, and then the three oldest boys slipped off to bed, being tired with their rough bodily labor in the snow all day, and Dorothea drew her spinning-wheel by the stove and set it whirring, and the little ones got August down upon the old worn wolf-skin and clamored to him for a picture or a story. For August was the artist of the family.

He had a piece of planed deal that his father had given him, and some sticks of charcoal, and he would draw a hundred things he had seen in the day, sweeping each out with his elbow when the children had seen enough of it and sketching another in its stead,—faces and dogs' heads, and men in sledges, and old women in their furs, and pine-trees, and cocks and hens, and all sorts of animals, and now and then—very reverently—a Madonna and Child. It was all very rough, for there was no one to teach him anything. But it

was all life-like, and kept the whole troop of children shrieking with laughter, or watching breathless, with wide open, wondering, awed eyes.

They were all so happy: what did they care for the snow outside? Their little bodies were warm, and their hearts merry; even Dorothea, troubled about the bread for the morrow, laughed as she spun; and August, with all his soul in his work, and little rosy Ermengilda's cheek on his shoulder, glowing after his frozen afternoon, cried out loud, smiling, as he looked up at the stove that was shedding its heat down on them all,—

"Oh, dear Hirschvogel! you are almost as great and good as the sun! No; you are greater and better, I think, because he goes away nobody knows where all these long, dark, cold hours, and does not care how people die for want of him, but you—you are always ready: just a little bit of wood to feed you, and you will make a summer for us all the winter through!"

The grand old stove seemed to smile through all its iridescent surface at the praises of the child. No doubt the stove, though it had known three centuries and more, had known but very little gratitude.

It was one of those magnificent stoves in enamelled faïence which so excited the jealousy

of the other potters of Nürnberg that in a body they demanded of the magistracy that Augustin Hirschvogel should be forbidden to make any more of them,—the magistracy, happily, proving of a broader mind, and having no sympathy with the wish of the artisans to cripple their greater fellow.

It was of great height and breadth, with all the majolica lustre which Hirschvogel learned to give to his enamels when he was making love to the young Venetian girl whom he afterwards married. There was the statue of a king at each corner, modelled with as much force and splendor as his friend Albrecht Dürer could have given unto them on copperplate or canvas. The body of the stove itself was divided into panels, which had the Ages of Man painted on them in polychrome; the borders of the panels had roses and holly and laurel and other foliage, and German mottoes in black letter of odd Old-World moralizing, such as the old Teutons, and the Dutch after them, love to have on their chimney-places and their drinking-cups, their dishes and flagons. The whole was burnished with gilding in many parts, and was radiant everywhere with that brilliant coloring of which the Hirschvogel family, painters on glass and great in chemistry as they were, were all masters.

The stove was a very grand thing, as I say possibly Hirschvogel had made it for some mighty lord of the Tyrol at that time when he was an imperial guest at Innspruck and fashioned so many things for the Schloss Amras and beautiful Philippine Welser, the burgher's daughter, who gained an archduke's heart by her beauty and the right to wear his honors by her wit. Nothing was known of the stove at this latter day in Hall. The grandfather Strehla, who had been a master mason, had dug it up out of some ruins where he was building, and, finding it without a flaw had taken it home, and only thought it worth finding because it was such a good one to burn. That was now sixty years past, and ever since then the stove had stood in the big desolate empty room, warming three generations of the Strehla family, and having seen nothing prettier perhaps in all its many years than the children tumbled now in a cluster like gathered flowers at its feet. For the Strehla children, born to nothing else were all born with beauty: white or brown, they were equally lovely to look upon, and when they went into the church to mass, with their curling locks and their clasped hands, they stood under the grim statues like cherubs flown down off some fresco.

III

"TELL us a story, August," they cried, in chorus, when they had seen charcoal pictures till they were tired; and August did as he did every night pretty nearly,—looked up at the stove and told them what he imagined of the many adventures and joys and sorrows of the human being who figured on the panels from his cradle to his grave.

To the children the stove was a household god. In summer they laid a mat of fresh moss all round it, and dressed it up with green boughs and the numberless beautiful wild flowers of the Tyrol country. In winter all their joys centred in it, and scampering home from school over the ice and snow they were happy, knowing that they would soon be cracking nuts or roasting chestnuts in the broad ardent glow of its noble tower, which rose eight feet high above them with all its spires and pinnacles and crowns.

Once a travelling peddler had told them that the letters on it meant Augustin Hirschvogel, and that Hirschvogel had been a great German potter and painter, like his father before him, in the art-sanctified city of Nürnberg, and had made many such stoves, that were all miracles

of beauty and of workmanship, putting all his heart and his soul and his faith into his labors, as the men of those earlier ages did, and thinking but little of gold or praise.

An old trader, too, who sold curiosities not far from the church had told August a little more about the brave family of Hirschvogel, whose houses can be seen in Nürnberg to this day; of old Veit, the first of them, who painted the Gothic windows of St. Sebald with the marriage of the Margravine; of his sons and of his grandsons potters, painters, engravers all, and chief of them great Augustin, the Luca della Robbia of the North. And August's imagination, always quick had made a living personage out of these few records, and saw Hirschvogel as though he were in the flesh walking up and down the Maximilian Strass in his visit to Innspruck, and maturing beautiful things in his brain as he stood on the bridge and gazed on the emerald-green flood of the Inn.

So the stove had got to be called Hirschvogel in the family, as if it were a living creature, and little August was very proud because he had been named after that famous old dead German who had had the genius to make so glorious a thing. All the children loved the stove, but with August

the love of it was a passion; and in his secret heart he used to say to himself, "When I am a man, I will make just such things too, and then I will set Hirschvogel in a beautiful room in a house that I will build myself in Innspruck just outside the gates, where the chestnuts are, by the river: that is what I will do when I am a man."

For August, a salt-baker's son and a little cow-keeper when he was anything, was a dreamer of dreams, and when he was upon the high Alps with his cattle, with the stillness and the sky around him, was quite certain that he would live for greater things than driving the herds up when the spring-tide came among the blue sea of gentians, or toiling down in the town with wood and with timber as his father and grandfather did every day of their lives. He was a strong and healthy little fellow, fed on the free mountain-air, and he was very happy, and loved his family devotedly, and was as active as a squirrel and as playful as a hare; but he kept his thoughts to himself, and some of them went a very long way for a little boy who was only one among many, and to whom nobody had ever paid any attention except to teach him his letters and tell him to fear God. August in winter was only a little, hungry school-boy, trotting to be catechised

by the priest, or to bring the loaves from th
bake-house, or to carry his father's boots to th
cobbler; and in summer he was only one of hu
dreds of cow-boys, who drove the poor, half-blin
blinking, stumbling cattle, ringing their throa
bells, out into the sweet intoxication of the su
den sunlight, and lived up with them in th
heights among the Alpine roses, with only th
clouds and the snow-summits near. But he wa
always thinking, thinking, thinking, for all tha
and under his little sheepskin winter coat an
his rough hempen summer shirt his heart had
much courage in it as Hofer's ever had,—gre
Hofer, who is a household word in all the Innth
and whom August always reverently remembere
when he went to the city of Innspruck and ra
out by the foaming water-mill and under th
wooded height of Berg Isel.

August lay now in the warmth of the sto
and told the children stories, his own little brow
face growing red with excitement as his imagin
tion glowed to fever-heat. That human being
the panels, who was drawn there as a baby in
cradle, as a boy playing among flowers, as a lov
sighing under a casement, as a soldier in the mid
of strife, as a father with children round hi

as a weary, old, blind man on crutches, and, lastly, as a ransomed soul raised up by angels, had always had the most intense interest for August, and he had made, not one history for him, but a thousand; he seldom told them the same tale twice. He had never seen a story-book in his life; his primer and his mass-book were all the volumes he had. But nature had given him fancy, and she is a good fairy that makes up for the want of very many things! only, alas! her wings are so very soon broken, poor thing, and then she is of no use at all.

"It is time for you all to go to bed, children," said Dorothea, looking up from her spinning. "Father is very late to-night; you must not sit up for him."

"Oh, five minutes more, dear Dorothea!" they pleaded; and little rosy and golden Ermengilda climbed up into her lap. "Hirschvogel is so warm, the beds are never so warm as he. Cannot you tell us another tale, August?"

"No," cried August, whose face had lost its light, now that his story had come to an end, and who sat serious, with his hands clasped on his knees, gazing on to the luminous arabesques of the stove.

"It is only a week to Christmas," he sai
suddenly.

"Grandmother's big cakes!" chuckled litt
Christof, who was five years old, and thoug
Christmas meant a big cake and nothing else.

"What will Santa Claus find for 'Gilda
she be good?" murmured Dorothea over th
child's sunny head; for, however hard pover
might pinch, it could never pinch so tightly th
Dorothea would not find some wooden toy ar
some rosy apples to put in her little sister's sock

"Father Max has promised me a big goos
because I saved the calf's life in June," sa
August; it was the twentieth time he had to
them so that month, he was so proud of it.

"And Aunt Maïla will be sure to send us wi
and honey and a barrel of flour; she always does
said Albrecht. Their aunt Maïla had a chal
and a little farm over on the green slopes towar
Dorp Ampas.

"I shall go up into the woods and get Hirsc
vogel's crown," said August; they alwa
crowned Hirschvogel for Christmas with pi
boughs and ivy and mountain-berries. The he
soon withered the crown; but it was part of t
religion of the day to them, as much so as it w

cross themselves in church and raise their oices in the "O Salutaris Hostia."

And they fell chatting of all they would do on ne Christ-night, and one little voice piped loud gainst another's, and they were as happy as ough their stockings would be full of golden urses and jewelled toys, and the big goose in ne soup-pot seemed to them such a meal as kings ould envy.

IV

IN the midst of their chatter and laughter blast of frozen air and a spray of drive snow struck like ice through the room, an reached them even in the warmth of the old wol skins and the great stove. It was the door whic had opened and let in the cold; it was their fathe who had come home.

The younger children ran joyous to meet hin Dorothea pushed the one wooden arm-chair c the room to the stove, and August flew to set th jug of beer on a little round table, and fill a lon clay pipe; for their father was good to them al and seldom raised his voice in anger, and they ha been trained by the mother they had loved t dutifulness and obedience and a watchfu affection.

To-night Karl Strehla responded very wearil to the young ones' welcome, and came to th wooden chair with a tired step and sat dow heavily, not noticing either pipe or beer.

"Are you not well, dear father?" his daughte asked him.

"I am well enough," he answered, dully, an sat there with his head bent, letting the lighte pipe grow cold.

He was a fair, tall man, gray before his time, and bowed with labor.

"Take the children to bed," he said, suddenly, at last, and Dorothea obeyed. August stayed behind, curled before the stove; at nine years old, and when one earns money in the summer from the farmers, one is not altogether a child any more, at least in one's own estimation.

August did not heed his father's silence: he was used to it. Karl Strehla was a man of few words, and, being of weakly health, was usually too tired at the end of the day to do more than drink his beer and sleep. August lay on the wolfskin, dreamy and comfortable, looking up through his drooping eyelids at the golden coronets on the crest of the great stove, and wondering for the millionth time whom it had been made for, and what grand places and scenes it had known.

Dorothea came down from putting the little ones in their beds; the cuckoo-clock in the corner struck eight; she looked to her father and the untouched pipe, then sat down to her spinning, saying nothing. She thought he had been drinking in some tavern; it had been often so with him of late.

There was a long silence; the cuckoo called

the quarter twice; August dropped asleep, hi
curls falling over his face; Dorothea's whe
hummed like a cat.

Suddenly Karl Strehla struck his hand o
the table, sending the pipe on the ground.

"I have sold Hirschvogel," he said; and h
voice was husky and ashamed in his throat. Th
spinning-wheel stopped. August sprang ere
out of his sleep.

"Sold Hirschvogel!" If their father ha
dashed the holy crucifix on the floor at their fe
and spat on it, they could not have shuddere
under the horror of a greater blasphemy.

"I have sold Hirschvogel!" said Karl Strehl
in the same husky, dogged voice. "I have sol
it to a travelling trader in such things for tw
hundred florins. What would you?—I owe doub
that. He saw it this morning when you were a
out. He will pack it and take it to Munich t
morrow."

Dorothea gave a low shrill cry:

"Oh, father!—the children—in mid-winter!

She turned white as the snow without; h
words died away in her throat.

August stood, half blind with sleep, starin
with dazed eyes as his cattle stared at the su
when they came out from their winter's priso

"It is not true! It is not true!" he muttered. "You are jesting, father?"

Strehla broke into a dreary laugh.

"It is true. Would you like to know what is true too?—that the bread you eat, and the meat you put in this pot, and the roof you have over your heads, are none of them paid for, have been one of them paid for for months and months: if it had not been for your grandfather I should have been in prison all summer and autumn, and he is out of patience and will do no more now. There is no work to be had; the masters go to younger men: they say I work ill; it may be so. Who can keep his head above water with ten hungry children dragging him down? When your mother lived, it was different. Boy, you stare at me as if I were a mad dog! You have made a god of yon china thing. Well—it goes: goes to-morrow. Two hundred florins, that is something. It will keep me out of prison for a little, and with the spring things may turn——"

August stood like a creature paralyzed. His eyes were wide open, fastened on his father's with terror and incredulous horror; his face had grown as white as his sister's; his chest heaved with tearless sobs.

"It is not true! It is not true!" he echoed,

stupidly. It seemed to him that the very ski
must fall, and the earth perish, if they could ta
away Hirschvogel. They might as soon talk
tearing down God's sun out of the heavens.

"You will find it true," said his father, do
gedly, and angered because he was in his ov
soul bitterly ashamed to have bartered away t
heirloom and treasure of his race and the co
fort and health-giver of his young childre
"You will find it true. The dealer has paid r
half the money to-night, and will pay me t
other half to-morrow when he packs it up a
takes it away to Munich. No doubt it is wor
a great deal more,—at least I suppose so, as
gives that,—but beggars cannot be choosers. T
little black stove in the kitchen will warm y
all just as well. Who would keep a gilded, paint
thing in a poor house like this, when one c
make two hundred florins by it? Dorothea, y
never sobbed more when your mother died. Wh
is it, when all is said?—a bit of hardware mu
too grand-looking for such a room as this.
all the Strehlas had not been born fools it wou
have been sold a century ago, when it was d
up out of the ground. 'It is a stove for a museum
the trader said when he saw it. To a museu
let it go."

August gave a shrill shriek like a hare's when
is caught for its death, and threw himself on
is knees at his father's feet.

"Oh, father, father!" he cried, convulsively,
is hands closing on Strehla's knees, and his up-
ifted face blanched and distorted with terror.
Oh, father, dear father, you cannot mean what
ou say? Send *it* away—our life, our sun, our
oy, our comfort? We shall all die in the dark
nd cold. Sell *me* rather. Sell me to any trade
r any pain you like; I will not mind. But
Hirschvogel!—it is like selling the very cross off
he altar! You must be in jest. You could not do
uch a thing—you could not!—you who have
lways been gentle and good, and who have sat
n the warmth here year after year with our
nother. It is not a piece of hardware, as you
ay; it is a living thing, for a great man's
houghts and fancies have put life into it, and it
oves us though we are only poor little children,
nd we love it with all our hearts and souls, and
p in heaven I am sure the dead Hirschvogel
nows! Oh, listen; I will go and try and get
ork to-morrow! I will ask them to let me cut
e or make the paths through the snow. There
ust be something I could do, and I will beg the
eople we owe money to to wait; they are all

neighbors, they will be patient. But sell Hirsc
vogel!—oh, never! never! never! Give the flori
back to the vile man. Tell him it would be like se
ing the shroud out of mother's coffin, or the golde
curls off Ermengilda's head! Oh, father, de
father! do hear me, for pity's sake!"

Strehla was moved by the boy's anguish. H
loved his children, though he was often weary
them, and their pain was pain to him. But b
sides emotion, and stronger than emotion, was t
anger that August roused in him: he hated a
despised himself for the barter of the heirloo
of his race, and every word of the child stu
him with a stinging sense of shame.

And he spoke in his wrath rather than in h
sorrow.

"You are a little fool," he said, harshly,
they had never heard him speak. "You ra
like a play-actor. Get up and go to bed. T
stove is sold. There is no more to be said. Ch
dren like you have nothing to do with such ma
ters. The stove is sold, and goes to Munich t
morrow. What is it to you? Be thankful I c
get bread for you. Get on your legs, I say, a
go to bed."

Strehla took up the jug of ale as he pause
and drained it slowly as a man who had no car

August sprang to his feet and threw his hair
k off his face; the blood rushed into his cheeks,
king them scarlet; his great soft eyes flamed
ght with furious passion.

"You *dare* not!" he cried, aloud, "you dare
t sell it, I say! It is not yours alone; it is
rs——"

Strehla flung the emptied jug on the bricks
th a force that shivered it to atoms, and, rising
his feet, struck his son a blow that felled him
the floor. It was the first time in all his life
at he had ever raised his hand against any one
his children.

Then he took the oil-lamp that stood at his
bow and stumbled off to his own chamber with
cloud before his eyes.

"What has happened?" said August, a little
hile later, as he opened his eyes and saw
orothea weeping above him on the wolf-skin be-
re the stove. He had been struck backward,
d his head had fallen on the hard bricks where
e wolf-skin did not reach. He sat up a moment,
th his face bent upon his hands.

"I remember now," he said, very low, under
s breath.

Dorothea showered kisses on him, while her
rs fell like rain.

"But, oh, dear, how could you speak so
father?" she murmured. "It was very wrong
"No, I was right," said August, and his lit
mouth, that hitherto had only curled in laught
curved downward with a fixed and bitter seriou
ness. "How dare he? How dare he?" he mu
tered, with his head sunk in his hands. "It
not his alone. It belongs to us all. It is as mu
yours and mine as it is his."

Dorothea could only sob in answer. She w
too frightened to speak. The authority of th
parents in the house had never in her reme
brance been questioned.

"Are you hurt by the fall, dear August
she murmured, at length, for he looked to her
pale and strange.

"Yes—no. I do not know. What does
matter?"

He sat up upon the wolf-skin with passion
pain upon his face; all his soul was in rebelli
and he was only a child and was powerless.

"It is a sin; it is a theft; it is an infamy,"
said, slowly, his eyes fastened on the gilded f
of Hirschvogel.

"Oh, August, do not say such things
father!" sobbed his sister. "Whatever he do
we ought to think it right."

"IT IS A SIN, IT IS A THEFT, IT IS AN INFAMY," HE SAID

August laughed aloud.

"Is it right that he should spend his money
drink?—that he should let orders lie un-
executed?—that he should do his work so ill that
o one cares to employ him?—that he should live
n grandfather's charity, and then dare sell a
ing that is ours every whit as much as it is his?
o sell Hirschvogel! Oh, dear God! I would
ooner sell my soul!"

"August!" cried Dorothea, with piteous en-
reaty. He terrified her, she could not recognize
er little, gay, gentle brother in those fierce and
lasphemous words.

August laughed aloud again; then all at once
is laughter broke down into bitterest weeping.
He threw himself forward on the stove, covering
t with kisses, and sobbing as though his heart
would burst from his bosom.

What could he do? Nothing, nothing, noth-
ng!

"August, dear August," whispered Dorothea,
iteously, and trembling all over,—for she was a
ery gentle girl, and fierce feeling terrified her,—
'August, do not lie there. Come to bed: it is
uite late. In the morning you will be calmer.
t is horrible indeed, and we shall die of cold, at
east the little ones; but if it be father's will——"

"Let me alone," said August, through his teeth, striving to still the storm of sobs that shook him from head to foot. "Let me alone. In the morning!—how can you speak of the morning?"

"Come to bed, dear," sighed his sister. "Oh, August, do not lie and look like that! you frighten me. Do come to bed."

"I shall stay here."

"Here! all night!"

"They might take it in the night. Besides, to leave it *now!*"

"But it is cold! the fire is out."

"It will never be warm any more, nor shall we."

All his childhood had gone out of him, all his gleeful, careless, sunny temper had gone with it; he spoke sullenly and wearily, choking down the great sobs in his chest. To him it was as if the end of the world had come.

His sister lingered by him while striving to persuade him to go to his place in the little crowded bedchamber with Albrecht and Waldo and Christof. But it was in vain. "I shall stay here," was all he answered her. And he stayed,—all the night long.

V

THE lamps went out; the rats came and ran across the floor; as the hours crept on through midnight and past, the cold intensified and the air of the room grew like ice. August did not move; he lay with his face downward on the golden and rainbow-hued pedestal of the household treasure, which henceforth was to be cold for evermore, an exiled thing in a foreign city in a far-off land.

Whilst yet it was dark his three elder brothers came down the stairs and let themselves out, each bearing his lantern and going to his work in stone-yard and timber-yard and at the salt-works. They did not notice him; they did not know what had happened.

A little later his sister came down with a light in her hand to make ready the house ere morning should break.

She stole up to him and laid her hand on his shoulder timidly.

"Dear August, you must be frozen. August, do look up! do speak!"

August raised his eyes with a wild, feverish, sullen look in them that she had never seen there. His face was ashen white: his lips were like fire.

He had not slept all night; but his passionate sobs had given way to delirious waking dreams and numb senseless trances, which had alternated one on another all through the freezing, lonely, horrible hours.

"It will never be warm again," he muttered, "never again!"

Dorothea clasped him with trembling hands.

"August! do you not know me?" she cried, in an agony. "I am Dorothea. Wake up, dear—wake up! It is morning, only so dark!"

August shuddered all over.

"The morning!" he echoed.

He slowly rose up on to his feet.

"I will go to grandfather," he said, very low. "He is always good: perhaps he could save it."

Loud blows with the heavy iron knocker of the house-door drowned his words. A strange voice called aloud through the keyhole,—

"Let me in! Quick!—there is no time to lose. More snow like this, and the roads will all be blocked. Let me in! Do you hear? I am come to take the great stove."

August sprang erect, his fists doubled, his eyes blazing.

"You shall never touch it!" he screamed. "you shall never touch it!"

"Who shall prevent us?" laughed a big man, who was a Bavarian, amused at the fierce little figure fronting him.

"I!" said August. "You shall never have it! You shall kill me first!"

"Strehla," said the big man, as August's father entered the room, "you have got a little mad dog here: muzzle him."

One way and another they did muzzle him. He fought like a little demon, and hit out right and left, and one of his blows gave the Bavarian a black eye. But he was soon mastered by four brown men, and his father flung him with no light hand out from the door of the back entrance, and the buyers of the stately and beautiful stove set to work to pack it heedfully and carry it away.

When Dorothea stole out to look for August, he was nowhere in sight. She went back to little Gilda, who was ailing, and sobbed over the child, whilst the others stood looking on, dimly understanding that with Hirschvogel was going all the warmth of their bodies, all the light of their hearth.

Even their father now was sorry and ashamed; but two hundred florins seemed a big sum to him, and, after all, he thought the children could warm themselves quite as well at the black iron stove

in the kitchen. Besides, whether he regretted i now or not, the work of the Nürnberg potter wa sold irrevocably, and he had to stand still and se the men from Munich wrap it in manifold wrap pings and bear it out into the snowy air to wher an ox-cart stood in waiting for it.

In another moment Hirschvogel was gone,— gone forever and aye.

August had stood still for a time, leaning, sic and faint from the violence that had been used t him, against the back wall of the house. Th wall looked on a court where a well was, and th backs of other houses, and beyond them the spir of the Muntze Tower and the peaks of the moun tains.

Into the court an old neighbor hobbled fo water, and, seeing the boy, said to him,—

"Child, is it true your father is selling th big painted stove?"

August nodded his head, then burst into passion of tears.

"Well, for sure he is a fool," said the neigh bor. "Heaven forgive me for calling him s before his own child! but the stove was worth mint of money. I do remember in my youn days, in old Anton's time (that was your grea grandfather, my lad), a stranger from Vienn

w it, and said that it was worth its weight in
ld."

August's sobs went on their broken, impetu-
s course.

"I loved it! I loved it!" he moaned. "I do
t care what its value was. I loved it! *I loved*
"

"You little simpleton!" said the old man,
ndly. "But you are wiser than your father,
en all's said. If sell it he must, he should have
ken it to good Herr Steiner over at Sprüz, who
ould have given him honest value. But no
ubt they took him over his beer,—ay, ay! but
I were you I would do better than cry. I
ould go after it."

August raised his head, the tears raining
own his cheeks.

"Go after it when you are bigger," said the
eighbor, with a good-natured wish to cheer him
p a little. "The world is a small thing after all:
was a travelling clockmaker once upon a time,
nd I know that your stove will be safe enough
hoever gets it; anything that can be sold for a
ound sum is always wrapped up in cotton wool
y everybody. Ay, ay, don't cry so much; you
ill see your stove again some day."

Then the old man hobbled away to draw h
brazen pail full of water at the well.

August remained leaning against the wal
his head was buzzing and his heart fluttering wi
the new idea which had presented itself to h
mind. "Go after it," had said the old man. H
thought, "Why not go with it?" He loved
better than any one, even better than Dorothe
and he shrank from the thought of meeting h
father again, his father who had sold Hirschvog

He was by this time in that state of exaltati
in which the impossible looks quite natural a
commonplace. His tears were still wet on h
pale cheeks, but they had ceased to fall. He r
out of the court-yard by a little gate, and acro
to the huge Gothic porch of the church. Fro
there he could watch unseen his father's hous
door, at which were always hanging some blu
and-gray pitchers, such as are common and
picturesque in Austria, for a part of the hou
was let to a man who dealt in pottery.

He hid himself in the grand portico, whi
he had so often passed through to go to mass
compline within, and presently his heart gave
great leap, for he saw the straw-enwrapped sto
brought out and laid with infinite care on the b
lock-dray. Two of the Bavarian men mounted h

de it, and the sleigh-wagon slowly crept over the ow of the place,—snow crisp and hard as stone. he noble old minster looked its grandest and ost solemn, with its dark-gray stone and its vast chways, and its porch that was itself as big as any a church, and its strange gargoyles and mp-irons black against the snow on its roof and the pavement; but for once August had no es for it: he only watched for his old friend. hen he, a little unnoticeable figure enough, like a ore of other boys in Hall, crept, unseen by any f his brothers or sisters, out of the porch and ver the shelving uneven square, and followed in he wake of the dray.

Its course lay towards the station of the rail-ay, which is close to the salt-works, whose smoke t times sullies this part of clean little Hall, hough it does not do very much damage. From Hall the iron road runs northward through lorious country to Salzburg, Vienna, Prague, Buda, and southward over the Brenner into Italy. Was Hirschvogel going north or south? This at east he would soon know.

VI

AUGUST had often hung about the litt
station, watching the trains come and g
and dive into the heart of the hills an
vanish. No one said anything to him for idlin
about; people are kind-hearted and easy
temper in this pleasant land, and children an
dogs are both happy there. He heard th
Bavarians arguing and vociferating a great dea
and learned that they meant to go too and wante
to go with the great stove itself. But this the
could not do, for neither could the stove go b
a passenger-train nor they themselves go in
goods-train. So at length they insured the
precious burden for a large sum, and consente
to send it by a luggage-train which was to pa
through Hall in half an hour. The swift trai
seldom deign to notice the existence of Hall at a

August heard, and a desperate resolve mad
itself up in his little mind. Where Hirschvog
went would he go. He gave one terrible thoug
to Dorothea—poor, gentle Dorothea!—sitting
the cold at home, then set to work to execute h
project. How he managed it he never knew ve
clearly himself, but certain it is that when t
goods-train from the north, that had come all t

ay from Linz on the Danube, moved out of Hall, ugust was hidden behind the stove in the great vered truck, and wedged, unseen and undreamt by any human creature, amidst the cases of od-carving, of clocks and clock-work, of enna toys, of Turkish carpets, of Russian skins, Hungarian wines, which shared the same abode did his swathed and bound Hirschvogel. No ubt he was very naughty, but it never occurred him that he was so: his whole mind and soul ere absorbed in the one entrancing idea, to fol- w his beloved friend and fire-king.

It was very dark in the closed truck, which ad only a little window above the door; and it as crowded, and had a strong smell in it from e Russian hides and the hams that were in it. ut August was not frightened; he was close to irschvogel, and presently he meant to be closer ill; for he meant to do nothing less than get in- de Hirschvogel itself. Being a shrewd little y, and having had by great luck two silver roschen in his breeches-pocket, which he had rned the day before by chopping wood, he had ought some bread and sausage at the station of a oman there who knew him, and who thought e was going out to his uncle Joachim's chalet ove Jenbach. This he had with him, and this

he ate in the darkness and the lumbering, pound
ing, thundering noise which made him giddy, a
never had he been in a train of any kind before
Still he ate, having had no breakfast, and bein
a child, and half a German, and not knowing a
all how or when he ever would eat again.

When he had eaten, not as much as he wanted
but as much as he thought was prudent (for wh
could say when he would be able to buy anythin
more?), he set to work like a little mouse to mak
a hole in the withes of straw and hay which en
veloped the stove. If it had been put in a pack
ing-case he would have been defeated at the on
set. As it was, he gnawed, and nibbled, an
pulled, and pushed, just as a mouse would hav
done, making his hole where he guessed that th
opening of the stove was,—the opening throug
which he had so often thrust the big oak logs t
feed it. No one disturbed him; the heavy trai
went lumbering on and on, and he saw nothin
at all of the beautiful mountains, and shinin
waters, and great forests through which he wa
being carried. He was hard at work gettin
through the straw and hay and twisted rope
and get through them at last he did, and foun
the door of the stove, which he knew so wel
and which was quite large enough for a child

s age to slip through, and it was this which he d counted upon doing. Slip through he did, he had often done at home for fun, and curled mself up there to see if he could anyhow re- ain during many hours. He found that he uld; air came in through the brass fret-work the stove; and with admirable caution in such little fellow he leaned out, drew the hay and raw together, and rearranged the ropes, so that one could ever have dreamed a little mouse had en at them. Then he curled himself up again, is time more like a dormouse than anything se; and, being safe inside his dear Hirschvogel d intensely cold, he went fast asleep as if he ere in his own bed at home with Albrecht and hristof on either side of him. The train lum- ered on, stopping often and long, as the habit of oods-trains is, sweeping the snow away with its ow-switcher, and rumbling through the deep eart of the mountains, with its lamps aglow like he eyes of a dog in a night of frost.

The train rolled on in its heavy, slow fashion, nd the child slept soundly for a long while. When he did awake, it was quite dark outside n the land; he could not see, and of course he was n absolute darkness; and for a while he was orely frightened, and trembled terribly, and

sobbed in a quiet heart-broken fashion, thinkin
of them all at home. Poor Dorothea! hov
anxious she would be! How she would run ove
the town and walk up to grandfather's at Dor
Ampas, and perhaps even send over to Jenbach
thinking he had taken refuge with Uncl
Joachim! His conscience smote him for the sor
row he must be even then causing to his gentl
sister; but it never occurred to him to try and g
back. If he once were to lose sight of Hirsch
vogel how could he ever hope to find it again
how could he ever know whither it had gone,—
north, south, east, or west? The old neighbor ha
said that the world was small; but August knev
at least that it must have a great many places i
it: that he had seen himself on the maps on h
schoolhouse walls. Almost any other little bo
would, I think, have been frightened out of h
wits at the position in which he found himsel
but August was brave, and he had a firm belie
that God and Hirschvogel would take care o
him. The master-potter of Nürnberg was alway
present to his mind, a kindly, benign, an
gracious spirit, dwelling manifestly in that porc
lain tower whereof he had been the maker.

A droll fancy, you say? But every child wi

soul in him has quite as quaint fancies as this me was of August's.

So he got over his terror and his sobbing both, hough he was so utterly in the dark. He did not eel cramped at all, because the stove was so large, nd air he had in plenty, as it came through the ret-work running round the top. He was ungry again, and again nibbled with prudence t his loaf and his sausage. He could not at all ell the hour. Every time the train stopped and e heard the banging, stamping, shouting, and angling of chains that went on, his heart seemed o jump up into his mouth. If they should find im out! Sometimes porters came and took away his case and the other, a sack here, a bale there, now a big bag, now a dead chamois. Every time he men trampled near him, and swore at each other, and banged this and that to and fro, he was so frightened that his very breath seemed to stop. When they came to lift the stove out, would they find him? and if they did find him, would they kill him? That was what he kept thinking of all the way, all through the dark hours, which seemed without end. The goods-trains are usually very slow, and are many days doing what a quick train does in a few hours. This one was quicker than most, because it was bearing goods

to the King of Bavaria; still, it took all the short winter's day and the long winter's night and half another day to go over ground that the mail trains cover in a forenoon. It passed great armored Kuffstein standing across the beautiful and solemn gorge, denying the right of way to all the foes of Austria. It passed twelve hours later, after lying by in out-of-the-way stations pretty Rosenheim, that marks the border of Bavaria. And here the Nürnberg stove, with August inside it, was lifted out heedfully and set under a covered way. When it was lifted out, the boy had hard work to keep in his screams; he was tossed to and fro as the men lifted the huge thing, and the earthenware walls of his be loved fire-king were not cushions of down. However, though they swore and grumbled at the weight of it, they never suspected that a living child was inside it, and they carried it out on to the platform and set it down under the roof of the goods-shed. There it passed the rest of the night and all the next morning, and August was all the while within it.

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VII

THE winds of early winter sweep bitterly over Rosenheim, and all the vast Bavarian plain was one white sheet of snow. If there had not been whole armies of men at work always clearing the iron rails of the snow, no trains could ever have run at all. Happily for August, the thick wrappings in which the stove was enveloped and the stoutness of its own make screened him from the cold, of which, else, he must have died,—frozen. He had still some of his loaf, and a little—a very little—of his sausage. What he did begin to suffer from was thirst; and this frightened him almost more than anything else, for Dorothea had read aloud to them one night a story of the tortures some wrecked men had endured because they could not find any water but the salt sea. It was many hours since he had last taken a drink from the wooden spout of their old pump, which brought them the sparkling, ice-cold water of the hills.

But, fortunately for him, the stove, having been marked and registered as "fragile and valuable," was not treated quite like a mere bale of goods, and the Rosenheim station-master, who knew its consignees, resolved to send it on by a

passenger-train that would leave there at daybreak. And when this train went out, in it, among piles of luggage belonging to other travellers, to Vienna, Prague, Buda-Pesth, Salzburg, was August, still undiscovered, still doubled up like a mole in the winter under the grass. Those words, "fragile and valuable," had made the men lift Hirschvogel gently and with care. He had begun to get used to his prison, and a little used to the incessant pounding and jumbling and rattling and shaking with which modern travel is always accompanied, though modern invention does deem itself so mightily clever. All in the dark he was, and he was terribly thirsty; but he kept feeling the earthenware sides of the Nürnberg giant and saying, softly, "Take care of me oh, take care of me, dear Hirschvogel!"

He did not say, "Take me back;" for, now that he was fairly out in the world, he wished to see a little of it. He began to think that they must have been all over the world in all this time that the rolling and roaring and hissing and jangling had been about his ears; shut up in the dark he began to remember all the tales that had been told in Yule round the fire at his grandfather's good house at Dorf, of gnomes and elves and subterranean terrors, and the Erl King riding

n the black horse of night, and—and—and he egan to sob and to tremble again, and this time id scream outright. But the steam was screaming itself so loudly that no one, had there been ny one nigh, would have heard him; and in nother minute or so the train stopped with a ar and a jerk, and he in his cage could hear men rying aloud, "München! München!"

Then he knew enough of geography to know hat he was in the heart of Bavaria. He had had n uncle killed in the Bayerischenwald by the Bavarian forest guards, when in the excitement f hunting a black bear he had overpassed the imits of the Tyrol frontier.

That fate of his kinsman, a gallant young hamois-hunter who had taught him to handle a rigger and load a muzzle, made the very name of Bavaria a terror to August.

"It is Bavaria! It is Bavaria!" he sobbed o the stove; but the stove said nothing to him; t had no fire in it. A stove can no more speak vithout fire than a man can see without light. Give it fire, and it will sing to you, tell tales to ou, offer you in return all the sympathy you sk.

"It is Bavaria!" sobbed August; for it is lways a name of dread augury to the Tyroleans,

by reason of those bitter struggles and midnight shots and untimely deaths which come from those meetings of jäger and hunter in the Bayerischen-wald. But the train stopped; Munich was reached, and August, hot and cold by turns, and shaking like a little aspen-leaf, felt himself once more carried out on the shoulders of men, rolled along on a truck, and finally set down, where he knew not, only he knew he was thirsty,—so thirsty! If only he could have reached his hand out and scooped up a little snow!

He thought he had been moved on this truck many miles, but in truth the stove had been only taken from the railway-station to a shop in the Marienplatz. Fortunately, the stove was always set upright on its four gilded feet, an injunction to that effect having been affixed to its written label, and on its gilded feet it stood now in the small dark curiosity-shop of one Hans Rhilfer.

"I shall not unpack it till Anton comes," he heard a man's voice say; and then he heard a key grate in a lock, and by the unbroken stillness that ensued he concluded he was alone, and ventured to peep through the straw and hay. What he saw was a small square room filled with pots and pans, pictures, carvings, old blue jugs, old steel armor, shields, daggers, Chinese idols

JUST OPENED THE WINDOW, CRAMMED THE SNOW INTO HIS MOUTH AGAIN AND AGAIN

enna china, Turkish rugs, and all the art
nber and fabricated rubbish of a *bric-à-brac*
aler's. It seemed a wonderful place to him;
t, oh! was there one drop of water in it all?
hat was his single thought; for his tongue was
rching, and his throat felt on fire, and his chest
gan to be dry and choked as with dust. There
as not a drop of water, but there was a lattice
indow grated, and beyond the window was a
ide stone ledge covered with snow. August cast
e look at the locked door, darted out of his
iding-place, ran and opened the window,
rammed the snow into his mouth again and
gain, and then flew back into the stove, drew the
ay and straw over the place he entered by, tied
e cords, and shut the brass door down on him-
elf. He had brought some big icicles in with
im, and by them his thirst was finally, if only
emporarily, quenched. Then he sat still in the
ottom of the stove, listening intently, wide
wake, and once more recovering his natural
oldness.

The thought of Dorothea kept nipping his
eart and his conscience with a hard squeeze now
nd then; but he thought to himself, "If I can
ake her back Hirschvogel, then how pleased she
ill be, and how little 'Gilda will clap her hands!"

He was not at all selfish in his love for Hirsch vogel: he wanted it for them all at home quit as much as for himself. There was at the bot tom of his mind a kind of ache of shame that hi father—his own father—should have strippe their hearth and sold their honor thus.

A robin had been perched upon a stone griffi sculptured on a house-eave near. August ha felt for the crumbs of his loaf in his pocket, an had thrown them to the little bird sitting so easil on the frozen snow.

In the darkness where he was he now hear a little song, made faint by the stove-wall an the window-glass that was between him and i but still distinct and exquisitely sweet. It wa the robin, singing after feeding on the crumb August, as he heard, burst into tears. He though of Dorothea, who every morning threw out som grain or some bread on the snow before th church. "What use is it going *there,*" she sai "if we forget the sweetest creatures God ha made?" Poor Dorothea! Poor, good, tende much-burdened little soul! He thought of he till his tears ran like rain.

Yet it never once occurred to him to dream o going home. Hirschvogel was here.

VIII

PRESENTLY the key turned in the lock of the door, he heard heavy footsteps and the voice of the man who had said to his father, "You have a little mad dog; muzzle him!" The ice said, "Ay, ay, you have called me a fool any times. Now you shall see what I have tten for two hundred dirty florins. *Potztau-nd!* never did *you* do such a stroke of work."

Then the other voice grumbled and swore, and e steps of the two men approached more closely, d the heart of the child went pit-a-pat, pit-a-t, as a mouse's does when it is on the top of a eese and hears a housemaid's broom sweeping ar. They began to strip the stove of its wrap-ngs: that he could tell by the noise they made ith the hay and the straw. Soon they had ripped it wholly: that, too, he knew by the oaths d exclamations of wonder and surprise and pture which broke from the man who had not en it before.

"A right royal thing! A wonderful and ever-to-be-rivalled thing! Grander than the reat stove of Hohen-Salzburg! Sublime! mag-ficent! matchless!"

So the epithets ran on in thick guttural voices,

diffusing a smell of lager-beer so strong as they spoke that it reached August crouching in his stronghold. If they should open the door of the stove! That was his frantic fear. If they should open it, it would be all over with him. They would drag him out; most likely they would kill him, he thought, as his mother's young brother had been killed in the Wald.

The perspiration rolled off his forehead in his agony; but he had control enough over himself to keep quiet, and after standing by the Nürnberg master's work for nigh an hour, praising, marvelling, expatiating in the lengthy German tongue, the men moved to a little distance and began talking of sums of money and divided profits, of which discourse he could make out no meaning. All he could make out was that the name of the king—the king—the king came over very often in their arguments. He fancied at times they quarrelled, for they swore lustily and their voices rose hoarse and high; but after a while they seemed to pacify each other and agree to something, and were in great glee, and so in these merry spirits came and slapped the luminous sides of stately Hirschvogel, and shouted to it,—

"Old Mumchance, you have brought us rar

good luck! To think you were smoking in a silly fool of a salt-baker's kitchen all these years!"

Then inside the stove August jumped up, with flaming cheeks and clinching hands, and was almost on the point of shouting out to them that they were the thieves and should say no evil of his father, when he remembered, just in time, that to breathe a word or make a sound was to bring ruin on himself and sever him forever from Hirschvogel. So he kept still, and the men barred the shutters of the little lattice and went out by the door, double-locking it after them. He had made out from their talk that they were going to show Hirschvogel to some great person: therefore he kept quite still and dared not move.

Muffled sounds came to him through the shutters from the streets below,—the rolling of wheels, the clanging of church-bells, and bursts of that military music which is so seldom silent in the streets of Munich. An hour perhaps passed by; sounds of steps on the stairs kept him in perpetual apprehension. In the intensity of his anxiety, he forgot that he was hungry and many miles away from cheerful, Old World little Hall, lying by the clear gray river-water, with the ramparts of the mountains all around.

Presently the door opened again sharply. He

could hear the two dealers' voices murmurin unctuous words, in which "honor," "gratitude, and many fine long noble titles played the chie parts. The voice of another person, more clea and refined than theirs, answered them curtly and then, close by the Nürnberg stove and th boy's ear, ejaculated a single *"Wunderschön!* August almost lost his terror for himself in hi thrill of pride at his beloved Hirschvogel bein thus admired in the great city. He thought th master-potter must be glad too.

"Wunderschön!" ejaculated the stranger second time, and then examined the stove in a its parts, read all its mottoes, gazed long on a its devices.

"It must have been made for the Emperc Maximilian," he said at last; and the poor litt boy, meanwhile, within, was "hugged up int nothing," as you children say, dreading tha every moment he would open the stove. An open it truly he did, and examined the bras work of the door; but inside it was so dark tha crouching August passed unnoticed, screwed u into a ball like a hedgehog as he was. The gentl man shut to the door at length, without havin seen anything strange inside it; and then h talked long and low with the tradesmen, and,

his accent was different from that which August was used to, the child could distinguish little that he said, except the name of the king and the word "gulden" again and again. After awhile he went away, one of the dealers accompanying him, one of them lingering behind to bar up the shutters. Then this one also withdrew again, double-locking the door.

The poor little hedgehog uncurled itself and dared to breathe aloud.

What time was it?

Late in the day, he thought, for to accompany the stranger they had lighted a lamp; he had heard the scratch of the match, and through the brass fret-work had seen the lines of light.

He would have to pass the night here, that was certain. He and Hirschvogel were locked in, but at least they were together. If only he could have had something to eat! He thought with a pang of how at this hour at home they ate the sweet soup, sometimes with apples in it from Aunt Maïla's farm orchard, and sang together, and listened to Dorothea's reading of little tales, and basked in the glow and delight that had beamed on them from the great Nürnberg fire-king.

"Oh, poor, poor little 'Gilda! What is she

doing without the dear Hirschvogel?" h
thought. Poor little 'Gilda! she had only no
the black iron stove of the ugly little kitchen. O
how cruel of father!

August could not bear to hear the dealer
blame or laugh at his father, but he did feel tha
it had been so, so cruel to sell Hirschvogel. Th
mere memory of all those long winter evening
when they had all closed round it, and roaste
chestnuts or crab-apples in it, and listened t
the howling of the wind and the deep sound o
the church-bells, and tried very much to mak
each other believe that the wolves still came dow
from the mountains into the streets of Hall, an
were that very minute growling at the hous
door,—all this memory coming on him with th
sound of the city bells, and the knowledge tha
night drew near upon him so completely, bein
added to his hunger and his fear, so overcam
him that he burst out crying for the fiftieth tim
since he had been inside the stove, and felt th
he would starve to death, and wondered dreami
if Hirschvogel would care. Yes, he was su
Hirschvogel would care. Had he not decked
all summer long with Alpine roses and edelwei
and heaths and made it sweet with thyme an
honeysuckle and great garden-lilies? Had

ever forgotten when Santa Claus came to make it its crown of holly and ivy and wreathe it all around?

"Oh, shelter me; save me; take care of me!" he prayed to the old fire-king, and forgot, poor little man, that he had come on this wild-goose chase northward to save and take care of Hirschvogel!

After a time he dropped asleep, as children can do when they weep, and little robust hill-born boys most surely do, be they where they may. It was not very cold in this lumber-room; it was tightly shut up, and very full of things, and at the back of it were the hot pipes of an adjacent house, where a great deal of fuel was burnt. Moreover, August's clothes were warm ones, and his blood was young. So he was not cold, though Munich is terribly cold in the nights of December; and he slept on and on,—which was a comfort to him, for he forgot his woes, and his perils, and his hunger, for a time.

IX

MIDNIGHT was once more chiming from all the brazen tongues of the city when he awoke, and, all being still around him, ventured to put his head out of the brass door of the stove to see why such a strange bright light was round him.

It was a very strange and brilliant light indeed; and yet, what is perhaps still stranger, it did not frighten or amaze him, nor did what he saw alarm him either, and yet I think it would have done you or me. For what he saw was nothing less than all the *bric-à-brac* in motion.

A big jug, an Apostel-Krug, of Kruessen, was solemnly dancing a minuet with a plump Faenza jar; a tall Dutch clock was going through a gavotte with a spindle-legged ancient chair; a very droll porcelain figure of Littenhausen was bowing to a very stiff soldier in *terre cuite* of Ulm; an old violin of Cremona was playing itself, and a queer little shrill plaintive music that thought itself merry came from a painted spinet covered with faded roses; some gilt Spanish leather had got up on the wall and laughed; a Dresden mirror was tripping about, crowned with flowers, and a Japanese bonze was riding along

on a griffin; a slim Venetian rapier had come to blows with a stout Ferrara sabre, all about a little pale-faced chit of a damsel in white Nymphenburg china; and a portly Franconian pitcher in *grès gris* was calling aloud, "Oh, these Italians! always at feud!" But nobody listened to him at all. A great number of little Dresden cups and saucers were all skipping and waltzing; the teapots, with their broad round faces, were spinning their own lids like teetotums; the high-backed gilded chairs were having a game of cards together; and a little Saxe poodle, with a blue ribbon at its throat, was running from one to another, whilst a yellow cat of Cornelis Lachtleven's rode about on a Delft horse in blue pottery of 1489. Meanwhile the brilliant light shed on the scene came from three silver candelabra, though they had no candles set up in them; and, what is the greatest miracle of all, August looked on at these mad freaks and felt no sensation of wonder! He only, as he heard the violin and the spinet playing, felt an irresistible desire to dance too.

No doubt his face said what he wished; for a lovely little lady, all in pink and gold and white, with powdered hair, and high-heeled shoes, and all made of the very finest and fairest Meissen

china, tripped up to him, and smiled, and gave him her hand, and led him out to a minuet. And he danced it perfectly,—poor little August in his thick, clumsy shoes, and his thick, clumsy sheepskin jacket, and his rough homespun linen, and his broad Tyrolean hat! He must have danced it perfectly, this dance of kings and queens in days when crowns were duly honored, for the lovely lady always smiled benignly and never scolded him at all, and danced so divinely herself to the stately measures the spinet was playing that August could not take his eyes off her till, their minuet ended, she sat down on her own white-and-gold bracket.

"I am the Princess of Saxe-Royale," she said to him, with a benignant smile; "and you have got through that minuet very fairly."

Then he ventured to say to her,—

"Madame my princess, could you tell me kindly why some of the figures and furniture dance and speak, and some lie up in a corner like lumber? It does make me curious. Is it rude to ask?"

For it greatly puzzled him why, when some of the *bric-à-brac* was all full of life and motion some was quite still and had not a single thrill in it.

"My dear child," said the powdered lady, "is it possible that you do not know the reason? Why, those silent, dull things are *imitation!*"

This she said with so much decision that she evidently considered it a condensed but complete answer.

"Imitation?" repeated August, timidly, not understanding.

"Of course! Lies, falsehoods, fabrications!" said the princess in pink shoes, very vivaciously. "They only *pretend* to be what we *are!* They never wake up: how can they? No imitation ever had any soul in it yet."

"Oh!" said August, humbly, not even sure that he understood entirely yet. He looked at Hirschvogel: surely it had a royal soul within it: would it not wake up and speak? Oh dear! how he longed to hear the voice of his fire-king! And he began to forget that he stood by a lady who sat upon a pedestal of gold-and-white china, with the year 1746 cut on it, and the Meissen mark.

"What will you be when you are a man?" said the little lady, sharply, for her black eyes were quick though her red lips were smiling. "Will you work for the *Königliche Porcellan-Manufactur,* like my great dead Kandler?"

"I have never thought," said August, stam
mering; "at least—that is—I do wish—I do hop
to be a painter, as was Master Augustin Hirsch
vogel at Nürnberg."

"Bravo!" said all the real *bric-à-brac* in on
breath, and the two Italian rapiers left off figh
ing to cry, *"Benone!"* For there is not a bit o
true *bric-à-brac* in all Europe that does not kno
the names of the mighty masters.

August felt quite pleased to have won so muc
applause, and grew as red as the lady's shoe
with bashful contentment.

"I knew all the Hirschvögel, from old Ve
downwards," said a fat *grès de Flandre* beer-jug
"I myself was made at Nürnberg." And h
bowed to the great stove very politely, taking o
his own silver hat—I mean lid—with a courtl
sweep that he could scarcely have learned fro
burgomasters. The stove, however, was silen
and a sickening suspicion (for what is suc
heart-break as a suspicion of what we love?) can
through the mind of August: *Was Hirschvog
only imitation?*

"No, no, no, no!" he said to himself, stoutly
though Hirschvogel never stirred, never spok
yet would he keep all faith in it! After all the
happy years together, after all the nights

warmth and joy he owed it, should he doubt his own friend and hero, whose gilt lion's feet he had kissed in his babyhood? No, no, no, no!" he said, again, with so much emphasis that the Lady of Meissen looked sharply again at him.

"No," she said, with pretty disdain; "no, believe me, they may 'pretend' forever. They can never look like us! They imitate even our marks, but never can they look like the real thing, never can they *chassent de race.*"

"How should they?" said a bronze statuette of Vischer's. "They daub themselves green with verdigris, or sit out in the rain to get rusted; but green and rust are not *patina;* only the ages can give that!"

"And *my* imitations are all in primary colors, staring colors, hot as the colors of a hostelry's sign-board!" said the Lady of Meissen, with a shiver.

"Well, there is a *grès de Flandre* over there, who pretends to be a Hans Kraut, as I am," said the jug with the silver hat, pointing with his handle to a jug that lay prone on its side in a corner. "He has copied me as exactly as it is given to moderns to copy us. Almost he might be mistaken for me. But yet what a difference there is! How crude are his blues! how evidently

done over the glaze are his black letters! He ha
tried to give himself my very twist; but what
lamentable exaggeration of that playful deviatio
in my lines which in his becomes actual de
formity!"

"And look at that," said the gilt Cordova
leather, with a contemptuous glance at a broa
piece of gilded leather spread out on a tabl
"They will sell him cheek by jowl with me, an
give him my name; but look! *I* am overlaid wit
pure gold beaten thin as a film and laid on me i
absolute honesty by worthy Diego de las Gorgia
worker in leather of lovely Cordova in the blesse
reign of Ferdinand the Most Christian. *H*
gilding is one part gold to eleven other parts
brass and rubbish, and it has been laid on hi
with a brush—*a brush!*—pah! of course he wi
be as black as a crock in a few years' time, whil
I am as bright as when I first was made, an
unless I am burnt as my Cordova burnt its her
tics, I shall shine on forever."

"They carve pear-wood because it is so sof
and dye it brown, and call it *me!*" said an o
oak cabinet, with a chuckle.

"That is not so painful; it does not vulgari
you so much as the cups they paint to-day ar

christen after *me!*" said a Carl Theodor cup subdued in hue, yet gorgeous as a jewel.

"Nothing can be so annoying as to see common gimcracks aping *me!*" interposed the princess in the pink shoes.

"They even steal my motto, though it is Scripture," said a *Trauerkrug* of Regensburg in black-and-white.

"And my own dots they put on plain English china creatures!" sighed the little white maid of Nymphenburg.

"And they sell hundreds and thousands of common china plates, calling them after me, and baking my saints and my legends in a muffle of to-day; it is blasphemy!" said a stout plate of Gubbio, which in its year of birth had seen the face of Maestro Giorgio.

"That is what is so terrible in these *bric-à-brac* places," said the princess of Meissen. "It brings one in contact with such low, imitative creatures; one really is safe nowhere nowadays unless under glass at the Louvre or South Kensington."

"And they get even there," sighed the *grès de Flandre.* "A terrible thing happened to a dear friend of mine, a *terre cuite* of Blasius (you know the *terres cuites* of Blasius date from 1560).

Well, he was put under glass in a museum that shall be nameless, and he found himself set next to his own imitation born and baked yesterday at Frankfort, and what think you the miserable creature said to him, with a grin? 'Old Pipe clay,'—that is what he called my friend,—'the fellow that bought *me* got just as much commission on me as the fellow that bought *you,* and that was all that *he* thought about. You know it is only the public money that goes!' And the horrid creature grinned again till he actually cracked himself. There is a Providence above all things, even museums."

"Providence might have interfered before and saved the public money," said the little Meissen lady with the pink shoes.

"After all, does it matter?" said a Dutch jar of Haarlem. "All the shamming in the world will not *make* them us!"

"One does not like to be vulgarized," said the Lady of Meissen, angrily.

"My maker, the Krabbetje,* did not trouble his head about that," said the Haarlem jar proudly. "The Krabbetje made me for the kitchen, the bright, clean, snow-white Dutch

* Jan Asselyn, called Krabbetje, the Little Crab, born 1610, master-potter of Delft and Haarlem.

kitchen, wellnigh three centuries ago, and now I am thought worthy the palace; yet I wish I were at home; yes, I wish I could see the good Dutch vrouw, and the shining canals, and the great green meadows dotted with the kine."

"Ah! if we could all go back to our makers!" sighed the Gubbio plate, thinking of Giorgio Andreoli and the glad and gracious days of the Renaissance: and somehow the words touched the frolicsome souls of the dancing jars, the spinning teapots, the chairs that were playing cards; and the violin stopped its merry music with a sob, and the spinet sighed,—thinking of dead hands.

Even the little Saxe poodle howled for a master forever lost; and only the swords went on quarrelling, and made such a clattering noise that the Japanese bonze rode at them on his monster and knocked them both right over, and they lay straight and still, looking foolish, and the little Nymphenburg maid, though she was crying, smiled and almost laughed.

Then from where the great stove stood there came a solemn voice.

All eyes turned upon Hirschvogel, and the heart of its little human comrade gave a great jump of joy.

"My friends," said that clear voice from the

turret of Nürnberg faïence, "I have listened to all you have said. There is too much talking among the Mortalities whom one of themselves has called the Windbags. Let not us be like them. I hear among men so much vain speech, so much precious breath and precious time wasted in empty boasts, foolish anger, useless reiteration, blatant argument, ignoble mouthings, that I have learned to deem speech a curse, laid on man to weaken and envenom all his undertakings. For over two hundred years I have never spoken myself: you, I hear, are not so reticent. I only speak now because one of you said a beautiful thing that touched me. If we all might but go back to our makers! Ah, yes! if we might! We were made in days when even men were true creatures, and so we, the work of their hands, were true too. We, the begotten of ancient days, derive all the value in us from the fact that our makers wrought at us with zeal, with piety, with integrity, with faith,—not to win fortunes or to glut a market, but to do nobly an honest thing and create for the honor of the Arts and God. I see amidst you a little human thing who loves me, and in his own ignorant childish way loves Art. Now, I want him forever to remember

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this night and these words; to remember that we are what we are, and precious in the eyes of the world, because centuries ago those who were of single mind and of pure hand so created us, scorning sham and haste and counterfeit. Well do I recollect my master, Augustin Hirschvogel. He led a wise and blameless life, and wrought in loyalty and love, and made his time beautiful thereby, like one of his own rich, many-colored church casements, that told holy tales as the sun streamed through them. Ah, yes, my friends, to go back to our masters!—that would be the best that could befall us. But they are gone, and even the perishable labors of their lives outlive them. For many, many years I, once honored of emperors, dwelt in a humble house and warmed in successive winters three generations of little, cold, hungry children. When I warmed them they forgot that they were hungry; they laughed and told tales, and slept at last about my feet. Then I knew that humble as had become my lot it was one that my master would have wished for me, and I was content. Sometimes a tired woman would creep up to me, and smile because she was near me, and point out my golden crown or my ruddy fruit to a baby in her arms. That was

better than to stand in a great hall of a great city, cold and empty, even though wise men came to gaze and throngs of fools gaped, passing with flattering words. Where I go now I know not; but since I go from that humble house where they loved me, I shall be sad and alone. They pass so soon,—those fleeting mortal lives! Only we endure,—we, the things that the human brain creates. We can but bless them a little as they glide by: if we have done that, we have done what our masters wished. So in us our masters, being dead, yet may speak and live."

Then the voice sank away in silence, and a strange golden light that had shone on the great stove faded away; so also the light died down in the silver candelabra. A soft, pathetic melody stole gently through the room. It came from the old, old spinet that was covered with the faded roses.

Then that sad, sighing music of a bygone day died too; the clocks of the city struck six of the morning; day was rising over the Bayerischenwald. August awoke with a great start, and found himself lying on the bare bricks of the floor of the chamber, and all the *bric-à-brac* was lying quite still all around. The pretty Lady

of Meissen was motionless on her porcelain bracket, and the little Saxe poodle was quiet at her side.

He rose slowly to his feet. He was very cold, but he was not sensible of it or of the hunger that was gnawing his little empty entrails. He was absorbed in the wondrous sight, in the wondrous sounds, that he had seen and heard.

X

ALL was dark around him. Was it still midnight or had morning come? Morning, surely; for against the barred shutters he heard the tiny song of the robin.

Tramp, tramp, too, came a heavy step up the stair. He had but a moment in which to scramble back into the interior of the great stove, when the door opened and the two dealers entered, bringing burning candles with them to see their way.

August was scarcely conscious of danger more than he was of cold or hunger. A marvellous sense of courage, of security, of happiness, was about him, like strong and gentle arms enfolding him and lifting him upwards—upwards—upwards! Hirschvogel would defend him.

The dealers undid the shutters, scaring the red-breast away, and then tramped about in their heavy boots and chattered in contented voices, and began to wrap up the stove once more in all its straw and hay and cordage.

It never once occurred to them to glance inside. Why should they look inside a stove that they had bought and were about to sell again for all its glorious beauty of exterior?

The child still did not feel afraid. A great exaltation had come to him: he was like one lifted up by his angels.

Presently the two traders called up their porters, and the stove, heedfully swathed and wrapped and tended as though it were some sick prince going on a journey, was borne on the shoulders of six stout Bavarians down the stairs and out of the door into the Marienplatz. Even behind all those wrappings August felt the icy bite of the intense cold of the outer air at dawn of a winter's day in Munich. The men moved the stove with exceeding gentleness and care, so that he had often been far more roughly shaken in his big brothers' arms than he was in his journey now; and though both hunger and thirst made themselves felt, being foes that will take no denial, he was still in that state of nervous exaltation which deadens all physical suffering and is at once a cordial and an opiate. He had heard Hirschvogel speak; that was enough.

The stout carriers tramped through the city, six of them, with the Nürnberg fire-castle on their brawny shoulders, and went right across Munich to the railway-station, and August in the dark recognized all the ugly, jangling, pounding, roaring, hissing railway-noises, and thought,

despite his courage and excitement, "Will it be a *very* long journey?" For his stomach had at times an odd sinking sensation, and his head sadly often felt light and swimming. If it was a very, very long journey he felt half afraid that he would be dead or something bad before the end, and Hirschvogel would be so lonely: that was what he thought most about; not much about himself, and not much about Dorothea and the house at home. He was "high strung to high emprise," and could not look behind him.

Whether for a long or a short journey, whether for weal or woe, the stove with August still within it was once more hoisted up into a great van; but this time it was not all alone, and the two dealers as well as the six porters were all with it.

He in his darkness knew that; for he heard their voices. The train glided away over the Bavarian plain southward; and he heard the men say something of Berg and the Wurm-See, but their German was strange to him, and he could not make out what these names meant.

The train rolled on, with all its fume and fuss, and roar of steam, and stench of oil and burning coal. It had to go quietly and slowly on account

of the snow which was falling, and which had fallen all night.

"He might have waited till he came to the city," grumbled one man to another. "What weather to stay on at Berg!"

But who he was that stayed on at Berg, August could not make out at all.

Though the men grumbled about the state of the roads and the season, they were hilarious and well content, for they laughed often, and, when they swore, did so good-humoredly, and promised their porters fine presents at New-Year; and August, like a shrewd little boy as he was, who even in the secluded Innthal had learned that money is the chief mover of men's mirth, thought to himself, with a terrible pang,—

"They have sold Hirschvogel for some great sum. They have sold him already!"

Then his heart grew faint and sick within him, for he knew very well that he must soon die, shut up without food and water thus; and what new owner of the great fire-palace would ever permit him to dwell in it?

"Never mind; I *will* die," thought he; "and Hirschvogel will know it."

Perhaps you think him a very foolish little fellow; but I do not.

It is always good to be loyal and ready to endure to the end.

It is but an hour and a quarter that the train usually takes to pass from Munich to the Wurm-See or Lake of Starnberg; but this morning the journey was much slower, because the way was encumbered by snow. When it did reach Possenhofen and stop, and the Nürnberg stove was lifted out once more, August could see through the fret-work of the brass door, as the stove stood upright facing the lake, that this Wurm-See was a calm and noble piece of water, of great width, with low wooded banks and distant mountains, a peaceful, serene place, full of rest.

It was now near ten o'clock. The sun had come forth; there was a clear gray sky hereabouts; the snow was not falling, though it lay white and smooth everywhere, down to the edge of the water, which before long would itself be ice.

Before he had time to get more than a glimpse of the green gliding surface, the stove was again lifted up and placed on a large boat that was in waiting,—one of those very long and huge boats which the women in these parts use as laundries, and the men as timber-rafts. The stove, with much labor and much expenditure of time and care, was hoisted into this, and August would have

grown sick and giddy with the heaving and falling if his big brothers had not long used him to such tossing about, so that he was as much at ease head, as feet, downward. The stove once in it safely with its guardians, the big boat moved across the lake to Leoni. How a little hamlet on a Bavarian lake got that Tuscan-sounding name I cannot tell; but Leoni it is. The big boat was a long time crossing: the lake here is about three miles broad, and these heavy barges are unwieldy and heavy to move, even though they are towed and tugged at from the shore.

"If we should be too late!" the two dealers muttered to each other, in agitation and alarm. "He said eleven o'clock."

"Who was he?" thought August; "the buyer, of course, of Hirschvogel." The slow passage across the Wurm-See was accomplished at length: the lake was placid; there was a sweet calm in the air and on the water; there was a great deal of snow in the sky, though the sun was shining and gave a solemn hush to the atmosphere. Boats and one little steamer were going up and down; in the clear frosty light the distant mountains of Zillerthal and the Algau Alps were visible; market-people, cloaked and furred, went by on the water or on the banks;

the deep woods of the shores were black and gray and brown. Poor August could see nothing of a scene that would have delighted him; as the stove was now set, he could only see the old worm-eaten wood of the huge barge.

Presently they touched the pier at Leoni.

"Now, men, for a stout mile and half! You shall drink your reward at Christmas-time," said one of the dealers to his porters, who, stout, strong men as they were, showed a disposition to grumble at their task. Encouraged by large promises, they shouldered sullenly the Nürnberg stove, grumbling again at its preposterous weight, but little dreaming that they carried within it a small, panting, trembling boy; for August began to tremble now that he was about to see the future owner of Hirschvogel.

"If he look a good, kind man," he thought, "I will beg him to let me stay with it."

XI

THE porters began their toilsome journey, and moved off from the village pier. He could see nothing, for the brass door was over his head, and all that gleamed through it was the clear gray sky. He had been tilted on to his back, and if he had not been a little mountaineer, used to hanging head-downwards over crevasses, and, moreover, seasoned to rough treatment by the hunters and guides of the hills and the salt-workers in the town, he would have been made ill and sick by the bruising and shaking and many changes of position to which he had been subjected.

The way the men took was a mile and a half in length, but the road was heavy with snow, and the burden they bore was heavier still. The dealers cheered them on, swore at them and praised them in one breath; besought them and reiterated their splendid promises, for a clock was striking eleven, and they had been ordered to reach their destination at that hour, and, though the air was so cold, the heat-drops rolled off their foreheads as they walked, they were so frightened at being late. But the porters would not budge a foot quicker than they chose, and as

they were not poor four-footed carriers their employers dared not thrash them, though most willingly would they have done so.

The road seemed terribly long to the anxious tradesmen, to the plodding porters, to the poor little man inside the stove, as he kept sinking and rising, sinking and rising, with each of their steps.

Where they were going he had no idea, only after a very long time he lost the sense of the fresh icy wind blowing on his face through the brass-work above, and felt by their movements beneath him that they were mounting steps or stairs. Then he heard a great many different voices, but he could not understand what was being said. He felt that his bearers paused some time, then moved on and on again. Their feet went so softly he thought they must be moving on carpet, and as he felt a warm air come to him he concluded that he was in some heated chambers, for he was a clever little fellow, and could put two and two together, though he was so hungry and so thirsty and his empty stomach felt so strangely. They must have gone, he thought, through some very great number of rooms, for they walked so long on and on, on and on. At last the stove was set down again

and, happily for him, set so that his feet were downward.

What he fancied was that he was in some museum, like that which he had seen in the city of Innspruck.

The voices he heard were very hushed, and the steps seemed to go away, far away, leaving him alone with Hirschvogel. He dared not look out, but he peeped through the brass work, and all he could see was a big carved lion's head in ivory, with a gold crown atop. It belonged to a velvet fauteuil, but he could not see the chair, only the ivory lion.

There was a delicious fragrance in the air,—a fragrance as of flowers. "Only how can it be flowers?" thought August. "It is December!"

From afar off, as it seemed, there came a dreamy, exquisite music, as sweet as the spinet's had been, but so much fuller, so much richer, seeming as though a chorus of angels were singing all together. August ceased to think of the museum: he thought of heaven. "Are we gone to the Master?" he thought, remembering the words of Hirschvogel.

All was so still around him; there was no sound anywhere except the sound of the far-off choral music.

He did not know it, but he was in the royal castle of Berg, and the music he heard was the music of Wagner, who was playing in a distant room some of the motives of "Parsival."

Presently he heard a fresh step near him, and he heard a low voice say, close behind him, "So!" An exclamation no doubt, he thought, of admiration and wonder at the beauty of Hirschvogel.

Then the same voice said, after a long pause, during which no doubt, as August thought, this new-comer was examining all the details of the wondrous fire-tower, "It was well bought; it is exceedingly beautiful! It is most undoubtedly the work of Augustin Hirschvogel."

Then the hand of the speaker turned the round handle of the brass door, and the fainting soul of the poor little prisoner within grew sick with fear.

The handle turned, the door was slowly drawn open, some one bent down and looked in, and the same voice that he had heard in praise of its beauty called aloud, in surprise, "What is this in it? A live child!"

Then August, terrified beyond all self-control and dominated by one master-passion, sprang out of the body of the stove and fell at the feet of the speaker

"Oh, let me stay! Pray, meinherr, let me stay!" he sobbed. "I have come all the way with Hirschvogel!"

Some gentlemen's hands seized him, not gently by any means, and their lips angrily muttered in his ear, "Little knave, peace! be quiet! hold your tongue! It is the king!"

They were about to drag him out of the august atmosphere as if he had been some venomous, dangerous beast come there to slay, but the voice he had heard speak of the stove said, in kind accents, "Poor little child! he is very young. Let him go: let him speak to me."

The word of a king is law to his courtiers: so, sorely against their wish, the angry and astonished chamberlains let August slide out of their grasp, and he stood there in his little rough sheepskin coat and his thick, mud-covered boots, with his curling hair all in a tangle, in the midst of the most beautiful chamber he had ever dreamed of, and in the presence of a young man with a beautiful dark face, and eyes full of dreams and fire; and the young man said to him,—

"My child, how came you here, hidden in this stove? Be not afraid: tell me the truth. I am the king."

August in an instinct of homage cast his great

battered black hat with the tarnished gold tassels down on the floor of the room, and folded his little brown hands in supplication. He was too intensely in earnest to be in any way abashed; he was too lifted out of himself by his love for Hirschvogel to be conscious of any awe before any earthly majesty. He was only so glad—so glad it was the king. Kings were always kind; so the Tyrolese think, who love their lords.

"Oh, dear king!" he said, with trembling entreaty in his faint little voice, "Hirschvogel was ours, and we have loved it all our lives; and father sold it. And when I saw that it did really go from us, then I said to myself I would go with it; and I have come all the way inside it. And last night it spoke and said beautiful things. And I do pray you to let me live with it, and I will go out every morning and cut wood for it and you, if only you will let me stay beside it. No one ever has fed it with fuel but me since I grew big enough, and it loves me;—it does indeed; it said so last night; and it said that it had been happier with us than if it were in any palace——"

And then his breath failed him, and, as he lifted his little, eager, pale face to the young king's, great tears were falling down his cheeks

Now, the king likes all poetic and uncommon things, and there was that in the child's face which pleased and touched him. He motioned to his gentlemen to leave the little boy alone.

"What is your name?" he asked him.

"I am August Strehla. My father is Karl Strehla. We live in Hall, in the Innthal; and Hirschvogel has been ours so long,—so long!"

His lips quivered with a broken sob.

"And have you truly travelled inside this stove all the way from Tyrol?"

"Yes," said August; "no one thought to look inside till you did."

The king laughed; then another view of the matter occurred to him.

"Who bought the stove of your father?" he inquired.

"Traders of Munich," said August, who did not know that he ought not to have spoken to the king as to a simple citizen, and whose little brain was whirling and spinning dizzily round its one central idea.

"What sum did they pay your father, do you know?" asked the sovereign.

"Two hundred florins," said August, with a great sigh of shame. "It was so much money, and he is so poor, and there are so many of us."

The king turned to his gentlemen-in-waiting. "Did these dealers of Munich come with the stove."

He was answered in the affirmative. He desired them to be sought for and brought before him. As one of his chamberlains hastened on the errand, the monarch looked at August with compassion.

"You are very pale, little fellow: when did you eat last?"

"I had some bread and sausage with me; yesterday afternoon I finished it."

"You would like to eat now?"

"If I might have a little water I would be glad; my throat is very dry."

The king had water and wine brought for him, and cake also; but August, though he drank eagerly, could not swallow anything. His mind was in too great a tumult.

"May I stay with Hirschvogel?—may I stay?" he said, with feverish agitation.

"Wait a little," said the king, and asked, abruptly, "What do you wish to be when you are a man?"

"A painter. I wish to be what Hirschvogel was,—I mean the master that made *my* Hirschvogel."

"I understand," said the king.

Then the two dealers were brought into their sovereign's presence. They were so terribly alarmed, not being either so innocent or so ignorant as August was, that they were trembling as though they were being led to the slaughter, and they were so utterly astonished too at a child having come all the way from Tyrol in the stove, as a gentleman of the court had just told them this child had done, that they could not tell what to say or where to look, and presented a very foolish aspect indeed.

"Did you buy this Nürnberg stove of this little boy's father for two hundred florins?" the king asked them; and his voice was no longer soft and kind as it had been when addressing the child, but very stern.

"Yes, your majesty," murmured the trembling traders.

"And how much did the gentleman who purchased it for me give to you?"

"Two thousand ducats, your majesty," muttered the dealers, frightened out of their wits, and telling the truth in their fright.

The gentleman was not present: he was a trusted counsellor in art matters of the king's, and often made purchases for him.

The king smiled a little, and said nothing. The gentleman had made out the price to him as eleven thousand ducats.

"You will give at once to this boy's father the two thousand gold ducats that you received, less the two hundred Austrian florins that you paid him," said the king to his humiliated and abject subjects. "You are great rogues. Be thankful you are not more greatly punished."

He dismissed them by a sign to his courtiers, and to one of these gave the mission of making the dealers of the Marienplatz disgorge their ill-gotten gains.

August heard, and felt dazzled yet miserable. Two thousand gold Bavarian ducats for his father! Why, his father would never need to go any more to the salt-baking! And yet, whether for ducats or for florins, Hirschvogel was sold just the same, and would the king let him stay with it?—would he?

"Oh, do! oh, please do!" he murmured, joining his little brown weather-stained hands, and kneeling down before the young monarch, who himself stood absorbed in painful thought, for the deception so basely practised for the greedy sake of gain on him by a trusted counsellor was bitter to him.

He looked down on the child, and as he did so smiled once more.

"Rise up, my little man," he said, in a kind voice; "kneel only to your God. Will I let you stay with your Hirschvogel? Yes, I will; you shall stay at my court, and you shall be taught to be a painter,—in oils or on porcelain as you will, and you must grow up worthily, and win all the laurels at our Schools of Art, and if when you are twenty-one years old you have done well and bravely, then I will give you your Nürnberg stove, or, if I am no more living, then those who reign after me shall do so. And now go away with this gentleman, and be not afraid, and you shall light a fire every morning in Hirschvogel, but you will not need to go out and cut the wood."

Then he smiled and stretched out his hand; the courtiers tried to make August understand that he ought to bow and touch it with his lips, but August could not understand that anyhow; he was too happy. He threw his two arms about the king's knees, and kissed his feet passionately; then he lost all sense of where he was, and fainted away from hunger, and tire, and emotion, and wondrous joy.

As the darkness of his swoon closed in on him,

he heard in his fancy the voice from Hirschvogel saying,—

"Let us be worthy our maker!"

He is only a scholar yet, but he is a happy scholar, and promises to be a great man. Sometimes he goes back for a few days to Hall, where the gold ducats have made his father prosperous. In the old house-room there is a large white porcelain stove of Munich, the king's gift to Dorothea and 'Gilda.

And August never goes home without going into the great church and saying his thanks to God, who blessed his strange winter's journey in the Nürnberg stove. As for his dream in the dealers' room that night, he will never admit that he did dream it; he still declares that he saw it all, and heard the voice of Hirschvogel. And who shall say that he did not? for what is the gift of the poet and the artist except to see the sights which others cannot see and to hear the sounds that others cannot hear?

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